



## Mary Riley Styles Public Library

### Senior Book Discussion Series

### 2015-2016

Tuesday, September 15: ***Mister Owita's Guide to Gardening*** by Carol Wall (*Non-fiction*)

Carol Wall, a white woman living in Middle America, was at a crossroads in her life. Her children were grown; she had overcome illness; her beloved parents were getting older. One day she notices a dark-skinned African man tending her neighbor's yard. His name is Giles Owita. He bags groceries at the supermarket. He comes from Kenya. And he's very good at gardening. Though they are seemingly quite different, a caring bond grows between them. But they both hold long-buried secrets that, when revealed, will cement their friendship forever.

Tuesday, October 27: ***A Man Called Ove*** by Fredrik Backman (*Fiction*)

In this bestselling and quirky debut novel from Sweden, a grumpy yet loveable man finds his solitary world turned on its head when a boisterous young family moves in next door. Meet Ove. He's a curmudgeon with staunch principles, strict routines, and a short fuse. When the new family accidentally flattens Ove's mailbox, it is the lead-in to a comical and heartwarming tale about the profound impact one life has on countless others.

Tuesday, December 8: ***Shakespeare Saved My Life*** by Laura Bates (*Non-fiction*)

Shakespeare professor and prison volunteer Laura Bates thought she had seen it all. That is, until she decided to teach Shakespeare in a place the Bard had never been before: supermax solitary confinement. Surrounded by inmates known as the worst of the worst, is Larry Newton. A convicted murderer with several escape attempts under his belt and a brilliantly agile mind, Larry was trying to break out of prison at the same time Laura was fighting to get her program started behind bars. Thus begins the most unlikely of friendships, one bonded by Shakespeare and lasting years—a friendship that, in the end, would save more than one life.

Tuesday, January 19: ***Lila*** by Marilynne Robinson (*Fiction*)

Lila, homeless and alone after years of roaming the countryside, steps inside a Gilead, Iowa church and ignites a romance and a debate that will reshape her life. Neglected as a toddler, Lila was rescued by a canny young drifter, and brought up in a hardscrabble childhood. Despite bouts of violence and moments of desperation, their life had moments of joy and love. As the wife of minister John Ames, Lila struggles to reconcile the life of her family and their days of hardship with the Christian worldview of her husband.

Tuesday, March 8: ***The Lady in Gold*** by Anne-Marie O'Connor (*Non-fiction*)

The author regales us with the story of Gustav Klimt's 1907 masterpiece: the portrait of a Viennese Jewish socialite, Adele Bloch-Bauer. The celebrated painting, stolen by Nazis during World War II, subsequently became the subject of a decade-long dispute between her heirs and the Austrian government. When the U.S. Supreme Court became involved in the case, its decision had profound ramifications in the art world. Expertly researched, masterfully told, *The Lady in Gold* is at once a stunning depiction of fin-de-siècle Vienna, a riveting tale of Nazi war crimes, and a fascinating glimpse into the high-stakes workings of the contemporary art world.

Tuesday, April 19: ***The Billionaire's Vinegar*** by Benjamin Wallace (*Non-fiction*)

This is the true story of a 1787 Château Lafite Bordeaux - supposedly owned by Thomas Jefferson - that sold for \$156,000 at auction and of the eccentrics whose lives intersected with it. Was it truly entombed in a Paris cellar for 200 years? Or did it come from a secret Nazi bunker? Or from the moldy basement of a brilliant con artist? As Benjamin Wallace unravels the mystery, we meet a gallery of intriguing players. Suspenseful and thrillingly strange, this is the vintage tale of what could be the most elaborate con since the Hitler diaries.

Tuesday, June 7: ***All the Light We Cannot See*** by Anthony Doerr (*Fiction*)

A beautiful, stunningly ambitious instant New York Times bestseller about a blind French girl and a German boy whose paths collide in occupied France as both try to survive the devastation of World War II. Deftly interweaving the lives of Marie-Laure and Werner, Doerr illuminates the ways, against all odds, people try to be good to one another. Ten years in the writing, *All the Light We Cannot See* is a magnificent, deeply moving novel.